LIBRARY OF HEAVEN'S PATH

C1046: Lightning Elemental Orb

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Under normal circumstances, considering how concentrated the lightning was, it was impossible for Wu shi and the others to flee from the field of lightning. Yet, at this moment, they had vanished from sight. That could only mean one thing—the Stoneleaf King had returned, and he had assaulted the expedition team!

However, that thought only remained in Zhang Xuan's mind for a moment before being rejected.

Wait a moment… Ding Ding might be unreliable at times, but its fighting prowess is not one to be underestimated. As long as the opponent hasn't reached Saint 5-dan Leaving Aperture realm, it shouldn't be possible for the other party to defeat it. They should be fine under its protection!

Furthermore, I haven't been gone for too long. Even if Ding Ding is no match for the enemy, it should still be able to hold on for some time. Furthermore, considering the ridiculous concentration of the lightning falling around the area, no matter how formidable the Stoneleaf King may be, there's no way that he will able to withstand it. It would be difficult for him to even protect himself at the moment, so how could he have the chance to harm Wu shi and the others?

The Golden Origin Cauldron was a Saint intermediate-tier artifact. Even though it was only capable of ramming itself into others without anyone controlling it, thus severely limiting its fighting prowess, it should have been more than capable of keeping the Stoneleaf King away from the others!

Not to mention, it would have been difficult for even the Stoneleaf King to survive the violent assault of lightning, let alone kill others.

"Hmm?"

Guessing that the Stoneleaf King hadn't returned yet, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief before turning his gaze back to the rubble.

Since Wu shi and the others hadn't come under the assault of the Otherworldly Demons, the chances would be that they were currently hiding.

Taking a closer look, Zhang Xuan soon realized that something was amiss, and he chuckled softly.

Beneath the rubble of the ancient city, the dirt on the ground was fresh. If his deduction was not off, it was likely that Wu shi and the others were hidden underground.

Due to the unique constitution of humans, they would likely have drawn lightning to them had they stood above ground. As such, it was much safer for them to hide underground. That was indeed a good move on their part.

Hu!

Taking his body out from his storage ring, Zhang Xuan returned his soul to his body, and with a blast of zhenqi, he knocked away the surrounding rubble and began burrowing into the ground.

As expected, shortly after he burrowed into the ground, the intensity of the lightning strikes weakened considerably. At a depth of around eight meters underground, he saw the top of massive cauldron beneath him.

The Golden Origin Cauldron had expanded to its maximum size of around thirty meters wide. There was no one outside the cauldron, which meant that everyone was likely hiding within it.

"You are injured?"

Zhang Xuan was just about to pry open the cauldron lid to see how the others were doing when he realized that the aura of the Golden Origin Cauldron was extremely weak. It seemed to have sustained severe injuries.

"Young Master, you are here…" Upon seeing Zhang Xuan, the Golden Origin Cauldron responded with a relieved but feeble voice. "They are all fine."

"What happened?" Zhang Xuan frowned.

"The lightning was too strong; the others weren't able to withstand it at all. I tried to save them, so I expanded my body to its maximum size to take the attacks in their stead. I feel very tired. I want to rest now," the Golden Origin Cauldron said weakly.

Seeing the Golden Origin cauldron in such a state, Zhang Xuan couldn't help but clench his fists tightly together.

To expand to over thirty meters wide in the face of such concentrated lightning, it was no wonder the Golden Origin Cauldron had ended up in such a state.

As a Saint intermediate-tier artifact, the lightning wouldn't deal too much damage to its body. However, the same could not be said about its spirit.

From the very start, souls and spirits were exceptionally weak against lightning.

While the Golden Origin Cauldron had managed to save the expedition team, its spirit had ended up being severely wounded by the relentless lightning strikes. As such, its consciousness was starting to fade.

"I will impart a cultivation technique to you right now, so try to cultivate it. You mustn't fall asleep at this point!" Knowing that the Golden Origin Cauldron's spirit could very well die were it to fall asleep at this moment, Zhang Xuan panicked. He hurriedly flicked his wrist and passed a cultivation technique manual over.

It was a method to temper one's soul. While he was unsure whether it was effective against spirits or not, he didn't have any better alternatives at that moment.

While the Golden Origin Cauldron was rather rowdy and unreliable at times, there was no doubt about its loyalty. Not to mention, it had only landed itself in its current state due to his order to protect the others. He couldn't allow anything to happen to it!

"Alright… I will cultivate it when I have time… Young Master, I might fear death, but I am not coward…" The Golden Origin Cauldron's voice slowly trailed off, and eventually, it fell

completely silent.

"Ding Ding!" Zhang Xuan shouted in alarm, but the other party had already fallen asleep.

From the very start, the Golden Origin Cauldron had already been at its limit. It had been forcing itself to hold on until Zhang Xuan arrived.

"You aren't a coward; you are a hero," Zhang Xuan muttered softly to the Golden Origin Cauldron as he gritted his teeth tightly together. "Don't worry, I will save you."

The Golden Origin Cauldron might only have been an artifact, a very cowardly one at that, but in the crucial moment, it had still leaped in without any hesitation, choosing to sacrifice itself to protect the others.

Zhang Xuan had already promised to raise its cultivation to Saint 5-dan Leaving Aperture realm. He couldn't just allow the Golden Origin Cauldron to remain in a coma like that. No matter what, he had to save it and fulfill its wish!

Staring at the Golden Origin Cauldron for a moment longer, Zhang Xuan sighed deeply, his voice tinged with helplessness, before he pried open the lid and entered it.

"Principal Zhang, you are back!"

Upon seeing Zhang Xuan, Wu shi and the others hurriedly got to their feet and greeted him.

Under the protection of the Golden Origin Cauldron, they had been spared from the frenzied rampage of the lightning. On top of that, after recuperating from their injuries for some time, they had recovered considerably.

"Un. What happened? Why did the lightning suddenly run amok?" Zhang Xuan asked.

He had gone off to find Luo Ruoxin, so he wasn't too sure about the situation within the field of lightning. On the other hand, the expedition team had been at the center of the field of lightning when it all happened, so they would have a clearer understanding of the matter.

"It should be related to the Stoneleaf King that you spoke of. Perhaps, in the midst of searching for his treasure, he might have accidentally come into contact with something that resulted in the abrupt intensification of the lightning!" Wu shi deduced.

They had been discussing the matter a while ago, and this was the explanation that they found the most viable.

Otherwise, a field of lightning of such size couldn't possibly change all of a sudden, sending so many streaks of lightning down from above.

"That might very well be the case." Zhang Xuan nodded.

Indeed!

Previously, the Saint 4-dan Stoneleaf King had said that he was leaving to find some kind of artifact, but in the end, not too long after he had left, such a situation had occurred. There was bound to be a connection between the two matters.

"In which direction did the Stoneleaf King leave?" Zhang Xuan asked with narrowed eyes.

Had it not been for that fellow, the Golden Origin Cauldron wouldn't have fallen unconscious. No matter what, he had to exact vengeance!

Besides, regardless of what the artifact that the other party was seeking, it could only spell a calamity for them. Even at the cost of his life, he had to stop the other party!

Wu shi pointed and said, "He headed into the depths of the ancient city."

They were currently at the outskirts of the ancient city, and they had seen the Stoneleaf King heading toward the very center of the ancient city back then.

"I will head over there to take a look. You should all continue recuperating here for the moment," Zhang Xuan said with a wave of his hand.

Feng Xun stood up and said, "Principal Zhang, I will follow you. The Stoneleaf King is extremely strong; you won't be able to deal with him yourself. Also, I have a unique method that allows me to track down Otherworldly Demons."

He had only been unable to fight due to his zhenqi and stamina being sapped dry by the earlier demonic tune. During the battle with the Otherworldly Demons, Wu shi and Guild Leader Han had fought hard to protect the other expedition members, so he had not suffered severe injuries. Thus, after a moment of recuperation, he was already back to his peak state and ready to fight once more.

"Alright." Seeing that Feng Xun was in a good state, Zhang Xuan nodded.

Combat masters should charge bravely ahead without allowing their fear of death to get in their way. To ask them to cower in the face of an enemy was no different from challenging their faith.

Furthermore, even though Feng Xun had been badly pummeled in the battle against him, that was only due to the latter suppressing his cultivation. If the latter used the entirety of his Saint 3-dan pinnacle cultivation, there was a good chance that he could be a match for even the Stoneleaf King.

The ability of the combat masters to rival opponents stronger than them wasn't for show.

Not to mention, Feng Xun also possessed certain means to track down Otherworldly Demons.

While the Eye of Insight was also capable of tracking down the trail of Otherworldly Demons, the problem with that was that most of the traces of the trail had dissipated under the frenzied lightning strikes. Instead of struggling to find a nearly invisible trail, he might as well bring Feng Xun along instead. This would also be a good opportunity for him to see what means the combat masters possessed.

A few other combat masters and master teachers also expressed their interest to tag along as well, but Zhang Xuan turned all of them down.

Firstly, those combat masters and master teachers hadn't fully recovered yet, so they were unlikely to be much of a match for the Stoneleaf King in their current state. Secondly, they had to protect some of the weaker and more severely injured expedition members as well. Otherwise, if the Stoneleaf King were to find their hiding spot before the exploring party found him, the others would be powerless to stand against him.

To be safe, it was better to have Wu shi and Guild Leader Han remain with the rest of the expedition team.

Knowing the concerns that Zhang Xuan had, the others eventually relented. They hurriedly turned their attention back to recuperating from their injuries and depletion so that they could return to their peak state as soon as possible.

On the other hand, Zhang Xuan burrowed through the soil with Feng Xun and returned to the surface.

The rampage of the lightning had alleviated considerably in the time that he had spent underground. Even without resorting to his means as a soul oracle, he would still be able to avoid the lightning easily and travel through the field of lightning safely. Heaving a sigh of relief, he began heading toward the center of the ancient city.

Proceeding in, the lightning seemed to grow sparser and sparser. It was as if the ancient city harnessed some kind of unique power that prevented the lightning storm from wreaking havoc within.

However, while the lightning had decreased, the Stoneleaf King had used some kind of means to conceal his trail entirely. Even while using the Eye of Insight, Zhang Xuan found himself losing sight of the other party's trail.

"Let me take a look." Coming to a halt, Feng Xun flicked his wrist, and a unique artifact reminiscent of a compass appeared in his hand. He bit his finger and dripped a droplet of blood on the compass.

Weng!

The artifact whirred into action, and the needle on the compass pointed toward a certain direction.

"That way," Feng Xun said.

"What is this artifact? It is able to discern the route that the Otherworldly Demons have passed through?" Zhang Xuan asked in curiosity.

This was his first time seeing that artifact.

"This is the Undefiled Mirror. It is particularly sensitive to fresh blood and killing intent. Due to the Zhenqi of Slaughter that the Otherworldly Demons cultivate, killing intent is bound to linger in areas where they have passed by. This Undefiled Mirror serves to find the trail of killing intent, thus leading one to the Otherworldly Demon himself. Of course, the killing intent left behind by the Otherworldly Demons will eventually fade with time, so the effectiveness of the artifact will be very poor beyond the four-hour mark," Feng Xun replied.

"Undefiled Mirror?" Zhang Xuan nodded.

The main purpose behind the existence of the combat masters was to stand against the Otherworldly Demons. It seemed like the Undefiled Mirror was specially crafted to track down fleeing Otherworldly Demons.

The duo hurried in the direction pointed out by the Undefiled Mirror.

Every once in a while, Feng Xun would take out the Undefiled Mirror to ascertain their current location once more. After repeating the process several times, the duo soon found themselves standing before an old and tattered residence that stood at the very heart of the ancient city.

"Be careful!" Knowing that the Stoneleaf King was very likely to be within the residence, the duo glanced at one another before flying into the residence discreetly.

The courtyard of the residence had been completely destroyed. A towering Otherworldly Demon was currently seated at the centermost seat. Zhenqi gushed frenziedly out of his

raised hands, seemingly attempting to defend himself against some kind of power.

In front of him, there was a relatively large lake, and a deep blue sphere, which was around the size of a fist, revolved continuously.

The zhenqi exerted by the Otherworldly Demon was directed right at the sphere, seemingly attempting to suppress the power within it.

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